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Ballads of Blyndham Town

By

Robert DeCamp Leland



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Paul Bailey
Amityville, New York

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THE LURE

Who wouldn't be poet in May or in June?
Who wouldn't give ear to the lilt and the croon
Of the birds, or give answer to Spring's world-old
tune?

Through the green-mantled fields to wander care-free
With a song in the heart-nature's long jubilee;
Forgotten the cares of the mart and the trades—
Aye, even the sneer of the Philistine fades.

Who wouldn't be rhymester when spring days have come,
When the call of the open, on winds frolicsome,
Lures you forth, is there mortal whose heart could be
dumb;
Deaf to the song of the river and rill,
Blind to the beauty of mountain and hill?
Ah, no, for Spring's call is too sweet to the ear—
And the Philistine even forgets he must jeer.

Who wouldn't give words to the song of the Spring,
Where's the voice that at springtime's too sodden to sing
At the joy of the long road, when care's on the wing;
At the chant of the brooklet; the daisy-topped field;
In lovetime and joytime when sorrows are healed?
This the message of nature, of the old life re-born—
Such that even the Philistine loses his scorn.



MARY BRUNNER

Oh, Mary Brunner's a fine lass, a joy to the heart is she,
A smile in the midst of sorrow, calm on a storm-tossed
sea.

She's got the sweetest manner and eyes the blue of the
sky;

Yes, Mary Brunner's a fine lass, she's the kind of lass
for me.

Oh, Mary Brunner's a true lass, the kind that tells things
straight;

When truth's to be told she tells it and she doesn't
hesitate;

Not born to the guile of manners, she's the kind to
glorify;

Yes, Mary Brunner's a true lass, sincere, compassionate.

Oh, Mary Brunner's a queer lass, that's what you'd
probably say;

She had a chance to wed riches, but she married poor
Dannie Gray;

She loved him as he loved her, and she passed the
riches by;

Yes, Mary Brunner's a queer lass, for that isn't done
today.



Oh, Mary Brunner's a good lass, her goodness a toast to
men
From Enfield Valley to Sherville and on to Brandon's
Glen;
Whenever men get together the glasses are raised on
high,
For Mary Brunner's a good lass, true figure for sword
and pen.

Oh, Mary Brunner's a brave lass, one of the old-
fashioned sort;
She can pass the test of courage, she can shoulder the
pauper's lot;
True mate to the man and bravely, without the com-
plainant's sigh;
Oh, Mary Brunner's a brave lass, courageous in deed
and thought.

And ever down the long years, from the hearts of the
humble throng,
Her name will be chanted bravely, her memory ever
strong;
Her's was the beauty and goodness that time will e'er
beautify;
Her's is the name that dies not as long as men turn to
song.



SPRING

Spring has come to Blyndham
And o'er the country-side
The years-young hand of nature
Its beauty's glorified.
Green are the fields as ever, re-clothed at the year's
new birth;
Sure is that faith which never has failed to give joy to
earth.

The woods and the mountains so sombre
Have now changed their shade to green;
The brooklets are coursing swiftly
To the valley far down, serene.
There is the river slender, curling ever, onward, down;
There is the flock and its tender, on the slope above
Blyndham town.

And all these gifts of springtime
Are calling me to come
And join them in their beauty
Which seems—but is not—dumb.
I hear them each minute, each hour, their call cannot be
denied,
Each brooklet, aye every flower, a message thrice
beautified.



For Spring has come to Blyndham,
Has brought its cheer to all;
And youth and age both answer
United to its call.

The fields and the woods are chiming with the birds in
 Spring's e'er sweet song;
And gladness with hope is rhyming in that tribute
 through years still strong.



THE CABIN AT THE CROSS-ROADS

The cabin at the cross-roads stands deserted, silent, still;
Lone guardian of the meeting of the roads which o'er
the hill

Lead winding ever onward to distant Blyndham town,
Here upon the mountainside they join, then hurry down.

A cabin torn and broken now, rude palace of the past,
Honeysuckle to your gables, lilacs on your walls
amassed;

As if to guard your ruin from the sight of prying eyes—
Thrice beautified Time's havoc hid by nature's sweet
disguise.

Glorious is the history written in those walls of gray,
Mighty were those pioneers who bravely broke the way
In the forefront of endeavor, unhonored men but true;
This was the roof that sheltered them, this was the home
they knew.

What if its walls are time-stained and its dusty rooms
are bare,

The men who lived here simply had the will to do and
dare;

Its rough-hewn timbers witness to their faith, their
dauntless worth,

The spark of courage kindled there gave progress to
the earth.



Close by the road it stands there, silent ever through
the years,

Tribute ever to the memory of its hardy pioneers;

This was the home they slaved for, the idol of their
heart,

Just a cabin by the cross-roads where the roads from
Blyndham part.

EDITH

I'd like to know, please tell me, dear,
Just why you always hesitate
And blush and stammer, quite sedate,
And turn your head when I am near.

It's been this way for most a year—
Please tell me, dear, compassionate.
I'd like to know.

Were I a mystic, wise, austere,
This riddle I might penetrate;
Your secret'll be inviolate,
Come, tell me, sweet, I'll be sincere—
I'd like to know.



JUD RIVERS SAYS

You ask me am I wealthy and my answer is just yes;
Why shouldn't I be wealthy, there's the Gold of Spring's
Caress—

The joy of living simply with no thought of care nor
greed;

Humble I am but happy, aye and wealthy by that creed.
What wealth is greater than nature, if your heart's
unlocked to it?

What greater joy than the forest when in Spring you
tramp through it?

Each flower a message to you as you walk the brooklet's
side,

And the solemn flow of the river's treasure greater than
money-pride.

Riches! Who knows the sorrow and the pain that word
has brought,

The anguish and the suffering to the slaves who have
been caught

In the net of money-craving, that the lure for which
they've fought.

An' ye cannot dim their worship—for it's life to them
an' more—

Less they lose a precious minute piling up the golden ore
In the tearing, snaring struggle, in the cursing, grinding
race,



Oh, I've seen the men of Babylon, an' it's written on
each face;
Died and stamped on every heart there, and it runs
through every vein,
Cursed the deeds of every mart there, given birth by
the god of Gain.
Life to them is but a mocking, but a mire to trample
through
As they wallow in the dollars, ever start the count
anew;
Blind their eyes to nature's treasure, blind their souls to
the call of Spring,
Weary their backs to the money measure; voiceless, for
gold is the song they sing.
Let them take the trail and journey from the mart and
lose their blame
On the long road to the mountains, in the rivers purge
their shame;
This was the home God gave them, these the hills from
whence they came.

A ROMANCE OF THE FOUR CORNERS

John Severn's courtin' Sarah Shaw,
The daughter of the smith;
No wonder John's enamored,
Sarah's beauty is no myth.

Fairer than the fair she is;
Sweeter than the sweet;
Lovelier than the roses
Where road and river meet.

'Twas evening just at mailtime
When first the lovers met;
'Twas Spring, love's never-fail-time,
When youth will not forget.

John stood within the doorway
Of the office, Sarah passed;
Their eyes met for a moment,
Met and wavered, then held fast.

Love only needs a second's time
To have its story told;
In that swift glance was born romance—
Life's sweetness never old.



And ever since that meetin'
The two've been lovers true—
But John's not asked the question,
Though it's what he'd like to do.

The cause is more than bashfulness,
For John's not popular
With old Bruce Shaw—that is the flaw—
An' Bruce is Sarah's Pa.

Pa thinks that John's a dandy
An' a quitter an' afraid
To soil his hands in workin'—
Can't tell a hoe from spade.

But love, though it be side-tracked,
Will always find a way.
You can't dissuade a lad and maid—
Love only they obey.

'Twas yesterday it happened,
An' old Pa Shaw's contrite;
For John has proved his courage
And to Sarah's hand his right.



It happened at the smithy
Just at noontime by the clock;
The crowd was standin' jawin'
Of the weather an' such talk.

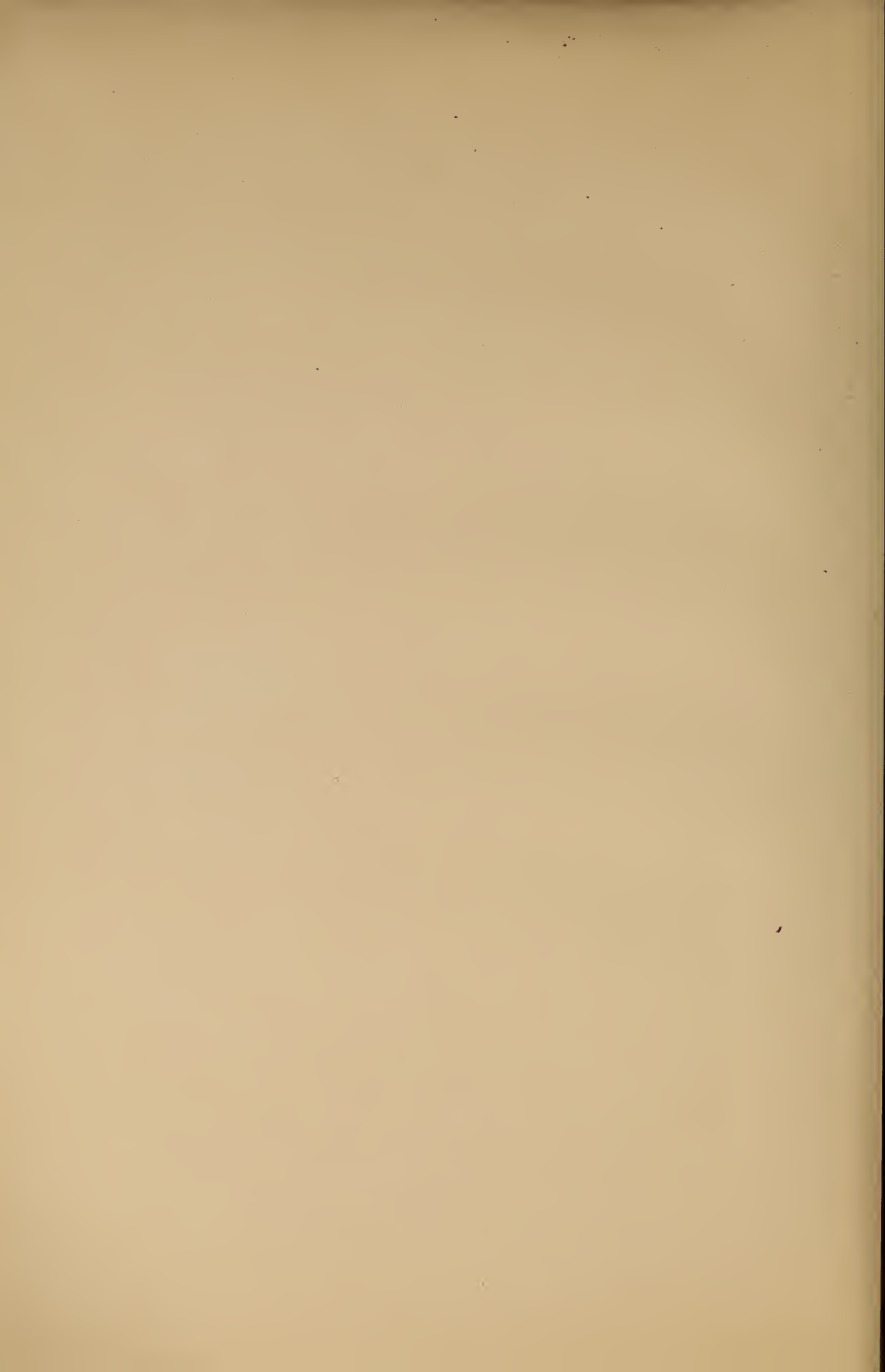
Old Shaw was there in apron,
An' Johnny stood there, too;
An' all the crowd was lazy
For the mornin's work was through.

Of a sudden round the corner
Up the road a team tore past,
An' Mrs. Clyffe, the parson's wife
Within it holdin' fast.

The reins were draggin' on the ground
An' it seemed 'sif all were lost,
When out jumps John as quick as if
From a cannon he'd been tossed.

He leaped right for the bridle—
A dive an' then a drop—
'Twas all so fast we stood aghast,
The team came to a stop.

Of all the crowd to give John their hand
Bruce Shaw gave his first an' true;
An' within the village church next week
Sarah's goin' to give hers, too.



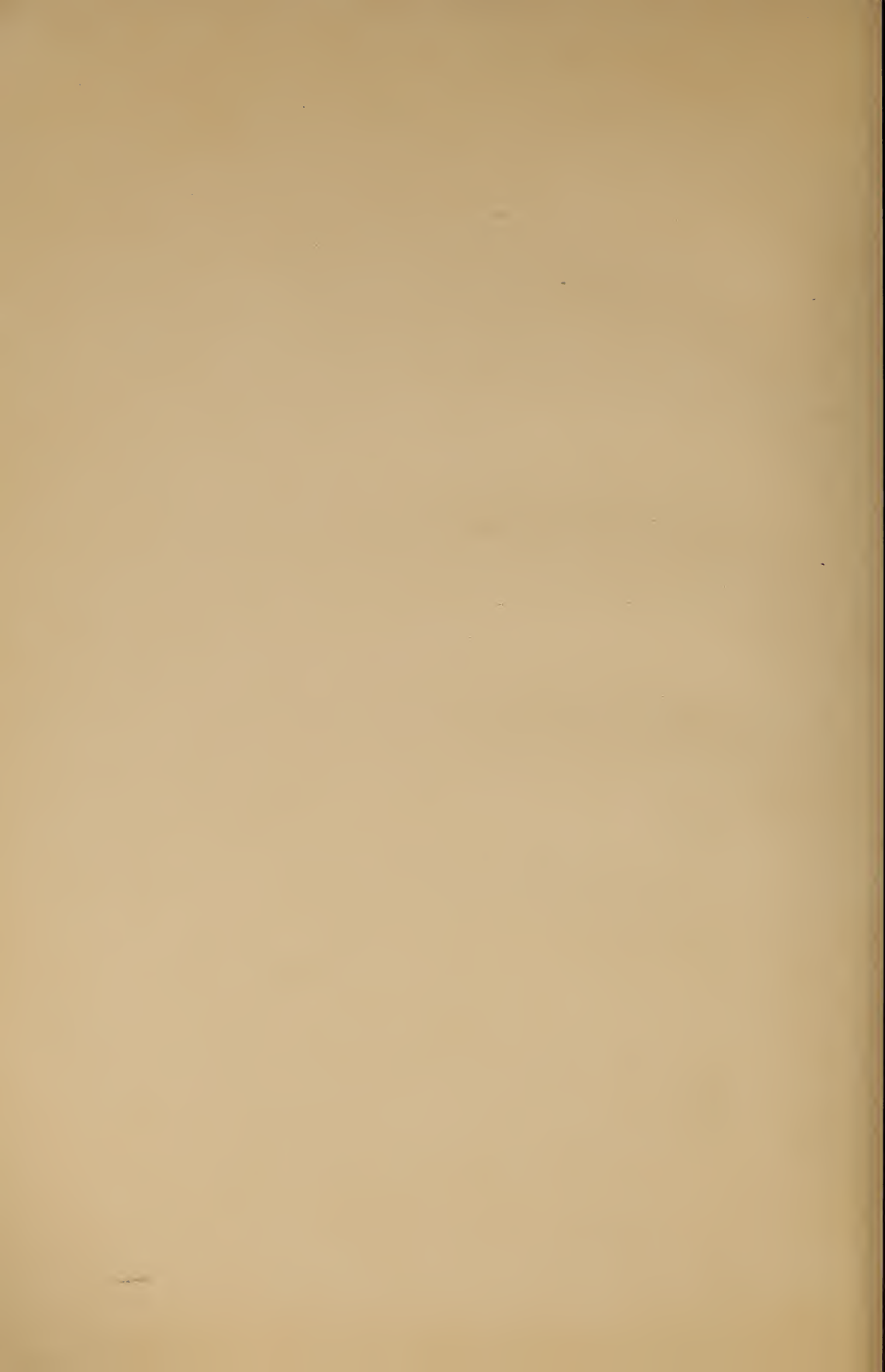
THE LONG ROAD

The lilacs are a-blooming
On every lawn and hedge
By every fence and arbor
And at the long road's edge;
Their world-old sweetness blending
With man's joy at Time's despair,
Their simple beauty lending
To the Spring its message fair.

Lilacs, flower of lovetime
Born its joys to sing;
Yours the fairest message—
Lilacs, born of Spring.

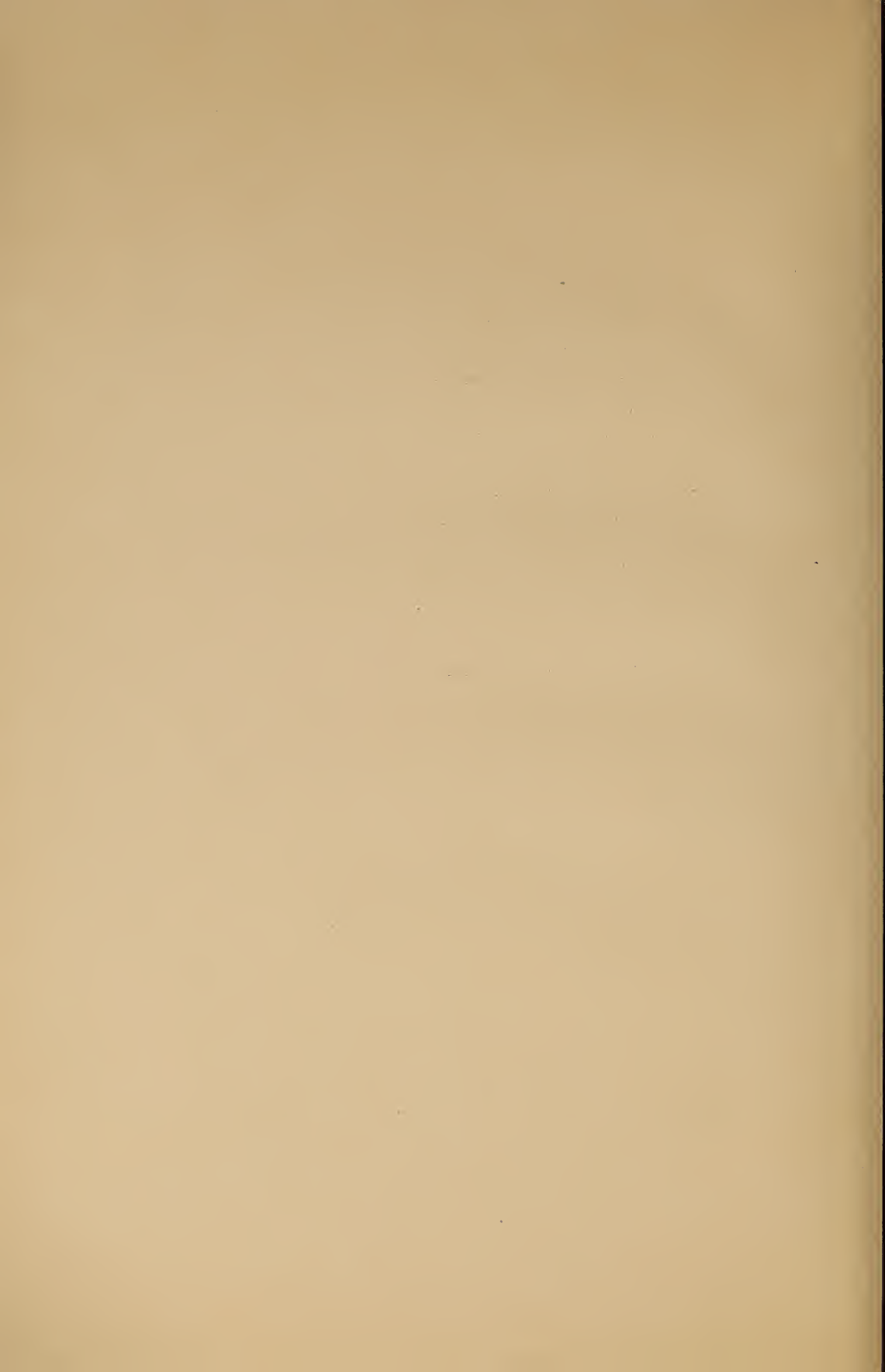
Up the long road to the mountains,
Up the trail in lilac-time
Lad and maiden take the journey
Lovers true with hearts in rhyme.
'Tis evening and 'tis springtime
And aye, 'tis lovetime, too;
So there upon the long road
They hear youth's call anew.

Lilacs, flower of lovetime,
Yours the voice of May;
Yours the sweetness ever
That sends sorrow on its way.



Heart to heart there beating,
Soul to soul in tune,
Hand to hand—Love's greeting—
Up the lilac trail in June.
Forgetful all of sorrow,
Two lovers but as one;
Glad eyes fixed on the morrow,
Toward the hills and setting sun.

Lilacs, flower of lovetime,
The heart of youth is yours;
The beauty and the sweetness
Of love that e'er endures.



EVENTIDE

Love's song of the long ago,
Fair remembrance though years pass by—
Sweet and low was that youth we know.

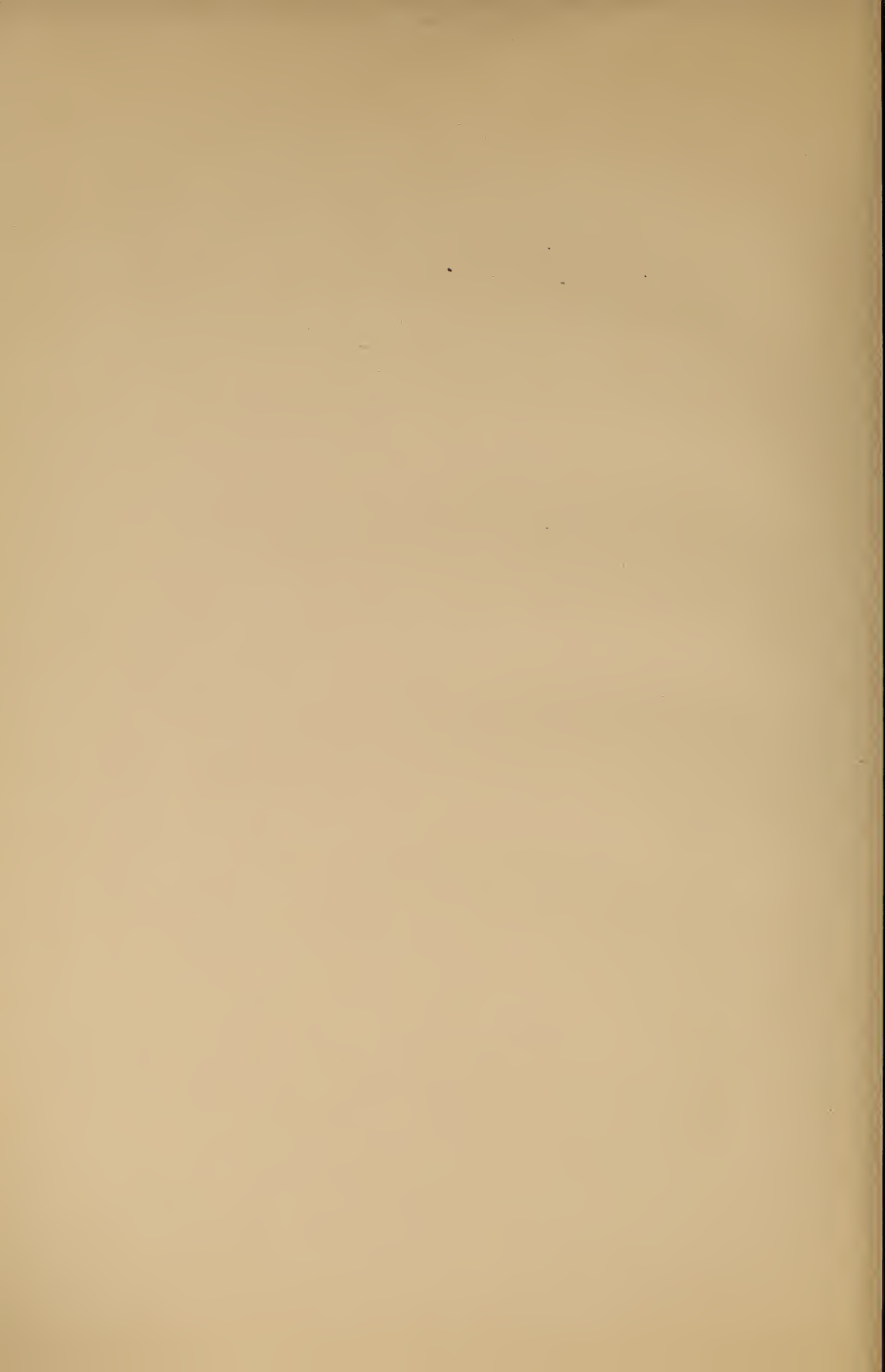
By the river's silver flow
We heard it first, you and I—
Love's song of the long ago.

'Twas Springtime and nature, lo!
Our love seemed to beautify—
Sweet and low was that youth we know.

Years pass, but though quick or slow
One measure can never die,
Love's song of the long ago.

Never discords that life may show
Love's rhythm can modify.
Sweet and low was that youth we know.

And ever we'll keep it so,
Time its beauty will glorify;
Love's song of the long ago,
Sweet and low was that youth we know.



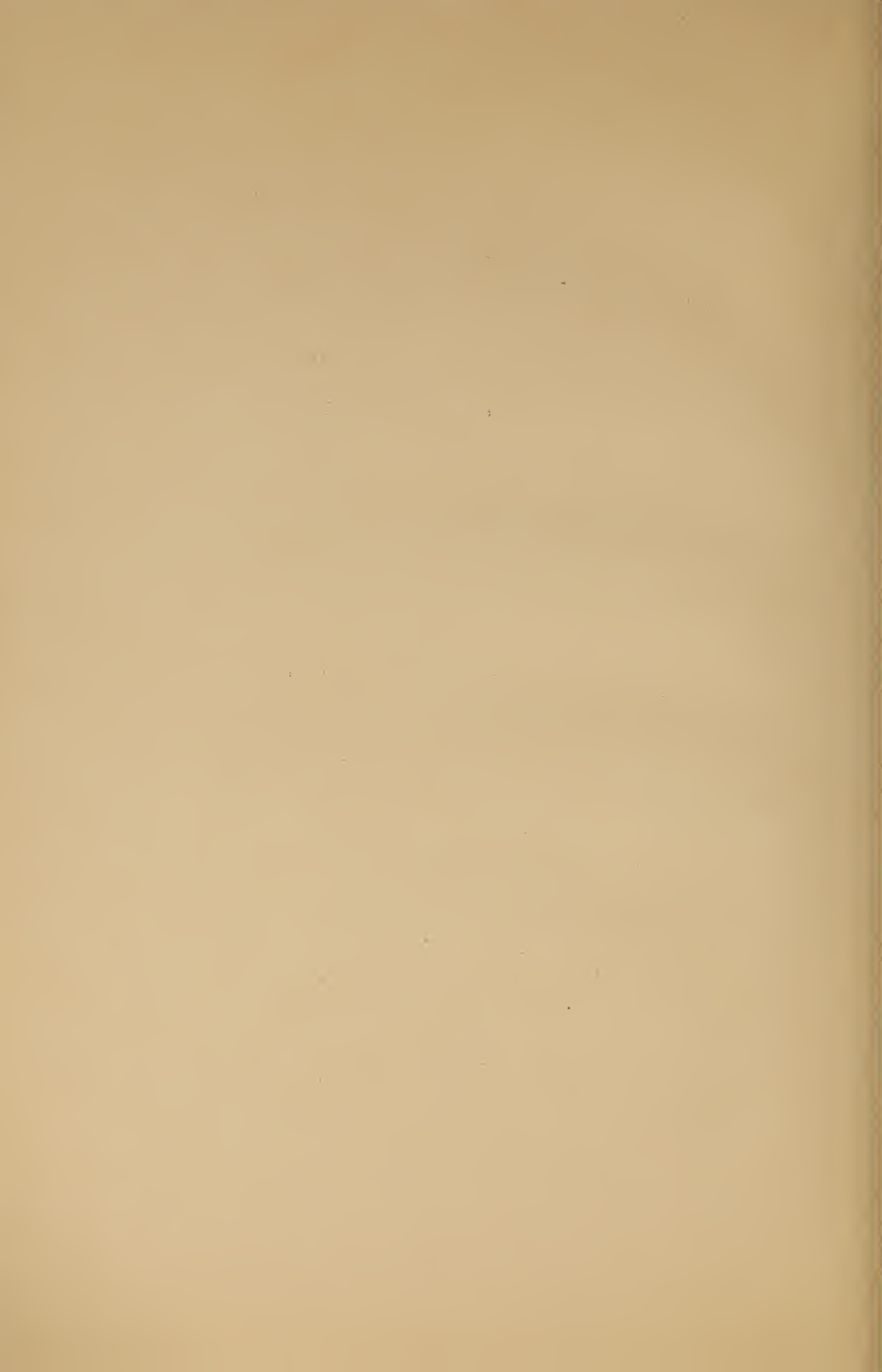
MAYTIME

'Tis Maytime now in Blyndham and the Spring calls
out to me,
Calls me softly o'er the mountains, o'er the valleys,
through the lea;
I hear it 'mid the clamor, that message from the hills,
My home of childhood's memory with its river, dale and
rills.

I long to leave the Crucible, to journey there again,
Back across the mountains and to lose my care and pain;
Lost upon the long road that leads away and down,
Winding o'er the ridges onward down to Blyndham town.

I can see again the homestead sheltered by the elms in
May,
The old trail by the river where a lad I used to play;
Where hours were as minutes, each day a round of joy,
Oh, that this life here had been not, would I were again
that boy.

The city's wheels whirl faster and the grind is endless,
long;
But ever there's the promise given birth by Maytime's
song.
Its message ever calling, calling me to journey there,
Over mountain, vale and river back again to Blyndham
fair.









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